



# THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF '76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

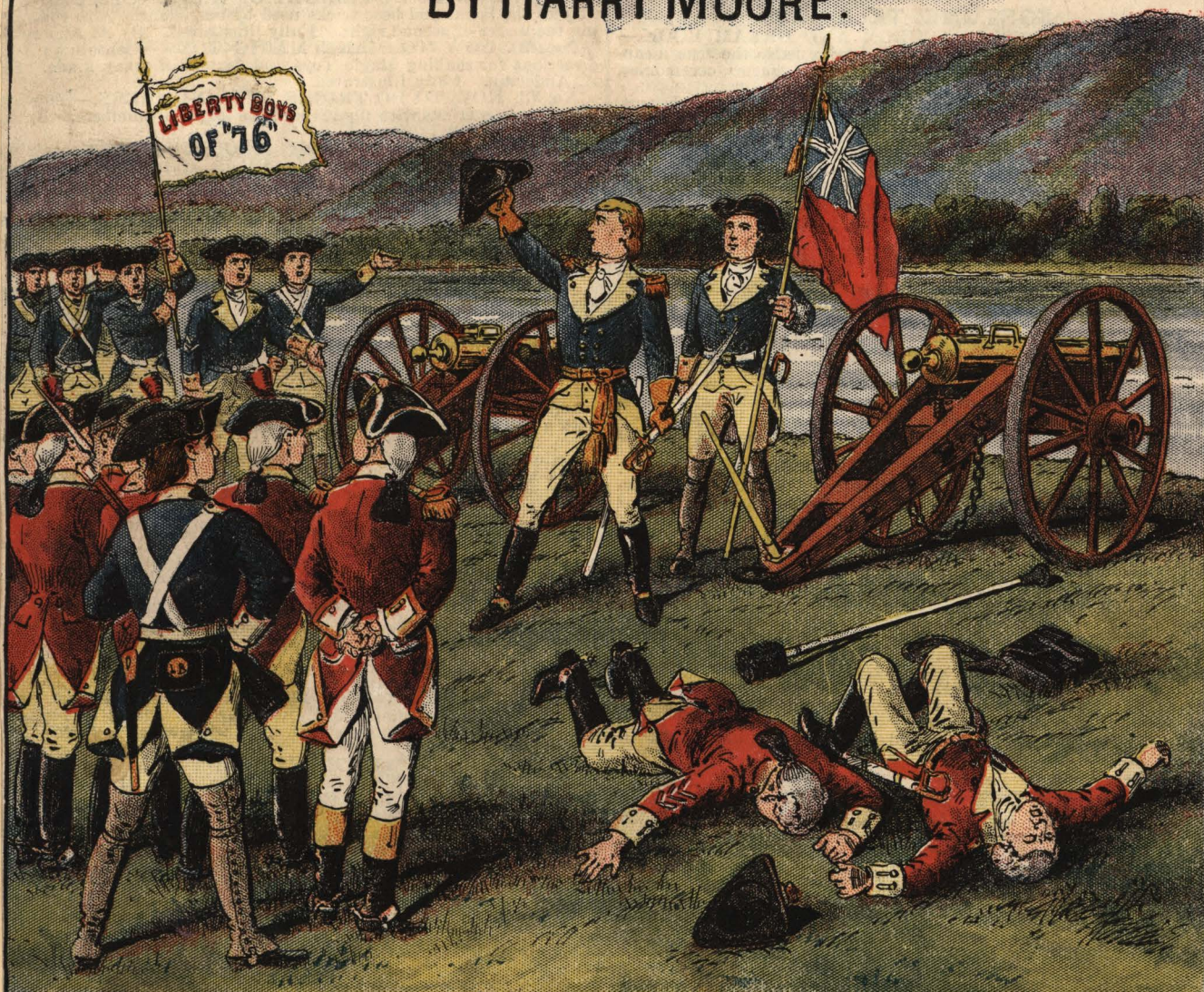
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No. 21.

NEW YORK, MAY 24, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS' FINE WORK; OR DOING THINGS UP BROWN. BY HARRY MOORE.



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## CHAPTER I.

### DICK, MAJOR, AND THE REDCOATS.

Early summer of the year 1778.

The British army under General Howe had spent the winter at Philadelphia.

The officers and men had spent their time in dissipation and revelry.

This suited the majority much better than fighting.

The officers and men had been well pleased.

But the people of England were not well pleased.

They were greatly dissatisfied.

They did not like the way General Howe had conducted himself.

He had been quartered in Philadelphia with a great army of eighteen thousand men.

Not more than twenty miles distant, at Valley Forge, was the patriot army.

As compared with the British army it was a mere handful of men.

The men were half naked, and more than half the time had but very little to eat.

It seemed to the people of England that it should have been a very easy matter for General Howe to attack the patriot army and annihilate it.

This would have ended the war, they were sure.

But General Howe had not done this.

More, he had not only done this thing which they thought he should have done, but during the past year he had done things which he should not have done.

The most noteworthy of these was his turning away and going southward to attack Philadelphia the fall before, when he had had orders to go up the Hudson to Albany and co-operate with Burgoyne, who was coming down from the north through the wilderness.

True, Howe had won a victory at the Brandywine, but had come within an ace of being defeated and having his great army put to rout at Germantown.

He had marched out to Whitemarsh, twelve miles distant, with the intention of attacking the patriot army, but

finding Washington ready for him, he had turned around and marched back again.

The dissatisfaction had reached such a pitch in England that the people grumbled and made such a fuss that General Howe sent in his resignation as commander-in-chief.

The resignation was promptly accepted, and Sir Henry Clinton, who was stationed at New York, was appointed commander-in-chief in Howe's place.

When the Tory citizens of Philadelphia learned that General Howe had resigned and was to return to England, their sorrow was great. He was such an easy-going, good-natured man that they liked him very much.

General Howe was to sail on the nineteenth of May.

The officers and Tory citizens decided to get up a grand entertainment in his honor.

It was to be a grand entertainment, indeed.

Several weeks were spent in making ready for it.

It was to be held on the eighteenth, the day before General Howe would sail.

The eighteenth came at last.

It was a great day for Philadelphia.

The streets were thronged.

The boats belonging to the British fleet, decorated with flags and loaded down with officers of the navy and army, and ladies of the city, paraded on the river.

Salutes were fired, bands played.

After the officers and ladies had landed from the boats, a Knights' Tournament was held, though, as it was all for show, no one was hurt in the mimic combat.

From that time on until midnight, music, dancing, wine-drinking and card-playing was in full blast.

So many toasts were drank—to the king, the queen, the members of the royal family, the British army and navy, to nearly everybody and everything that could be thought of—that many of the officers became so drunk that the servants had to take them and put them to bed.

This was indeed a fitting windup to General Howe's career in America, and especially to his career in Philadelphia.

Next day General Howe went aboard the ship and set sail for England.



The same day Sir Henry Clinton took command of the British army.

And at about one o'clock of this same day a bronze-faced, handsome youth of eighteen or nineteen years of age stood before General Washington in the latter's headquarters at Valley Forge.

The youth was Dick Slater, captain of a company of youths known as the "Liberty Boys of '76," and the most famous scout and spy of the Revolution.

"Dick," said General Washington, "I have sent for you because of the fact that I have some very important work which I wish done, and I know of no one more capable of doing it successfully than yourself."

Dick flushed with pleasure.

"Thank you, your excellency," he said. "I have always tried to do my duty and I am glad to know that I have in the past done my work in such a manner as to cause you to have confidence in me. What is it that you wish me to do, sir?"

"I will tell you, Dick: As you are well aware—for you brought me the information yourself—General Howe has resigned as commander-in-chief of the British army and set sail for England to-day."

General Washington paused, and Dick nodded.

"True, your excellency."

"Sir Henry Clinton has been appointed commander-in-chief."

"Yes, your excellency."

"He has been appointed commander-in-chief, and takes command to-day."

"True, sir."

Washington was silent for a few moments, and then he went on:

"Sir Henry must have received orders from England at the same time that he received his commission, and work will be begun at once for the making of some important move."

Washington paused again, looked straight into Dick's eyes for a few moments, and then said, in a low, impressive tone:

"Dick, it is very important that I should learn what those orders were and what the important move in question is to be. Do you think you can find out for me?"

"I'll try, sir."

Dick's reply was brief, but his tone and air were earnest.

"Ah!" said General Washington, in a tone of satisfaction. "That is the kind of talk I like to hear. 'I'll try,' those are the words used by movers of mountains. You will try, and I'm confident that if such a thing is possible you will succeed."

"I'll do my best, your excellency."

"Good! You will proceed to Philadelphia at once?"

"I will be in Philadelphia by nightfall."

Dick remained at headquarters a few minutes longer, talking the matter over with the commander-in-chief.

Then he left headquarters and made his way to the quarters occupied by his company of "Liberty Boys."

"What's up now, Dick?" asked Bob Estabrook, a bright, handsome youth of about Dick's age. "More fun and adventure for you, eh?"

"I don't know about that, Bob. I'm to go to Philadelphia, though."

"I thought so. When are you going?"

"This afternoon, Bob. I want to start so as to get to the city about nightfall."

"Jove! I wish I could go with you. But, of course——"

"I think it better that I should go alone, Bob," said Dick.

"Oh, all right!" said Bob, with a comical grimace. "The redcoats will nab you one of these days, however, and then perhaps the rest of us fellows will get a chance to have some fun and adventure."

"Well, I am not going to let myself be nabbed to oblige you, Bob," said Dick, with a smile.

"That's just like you; you always were selfish," said Bob, in mock seriousness.

Dick and Bob were the best and dearest of friends.

They had been companions and playmates all their lives, and understood each other thoroughly.

They lived on adjoining farms near Tarrytown, New York.

They had played together, had hunted, fished and swam together, had gone to school together, and they were more like two brothers than anything else.

There was another tie which bound them closer together.

The youths each had a sister.

Edith Slater and Alice Estabrook were each about seven teen years of age, and were two as sweet, beautiful and lovable girls as could have been found in a year's search.

Each of the youths had fallen in love with the other sister.

Their love was returned, and it was understood that some day, when this cruel war was ended, and the independence for which the youths were fighting had been achieved the young couples would be married.

We mention this to show that Bob was very far from meaning it when he intimated that he would be pleased if Dick should be captured by the redcoats.

Dick understood this, however.



He read between the lines and took Bob's railery good-naturedly.

Dick began making his preparations for his trip to Philadelphia at once.

He doffed his uniform and donned a ragged suit of citizen's clothing.

It did not take him long to make his preparations.

He was in no hurry to start, however.

He did not wish to reach Philadelphia before nightfall.

He was going to go on horseback.

As it was only twenty miles to Philadelphia, he could make the journey in three hours without forcing his horse to exert itself.

As it did not become dark much before eight o'clock, Dick would not start much before five.

He remained in the quarters occupied by the "Liberty Boys," talking with his comrades until about half-past four.

Then he went out and saddled and bridled his horse.

This horse was a magnificent animal which Dick had captured from the British many months before.

The horse had once been the favorite charger of General Howe.

Dick had named the horse "Major," and he thought the world and all of the animal.

There was good reason why he should think a great deal of the horse.

Major had carried the youth safely through many dangers.

In more than one instance his speed and staying powers had been the means of saving Dick from capture by the British.

Dick patted the horse on the neck.

"Good boy!" he said. "We are going on another dangerous expedition, Major. Are you ready for it?"

The horse neighed gently, and pawed the ground.

"Ah, you are! All right; I'm glad of it."

And again Dick patted the horse's neck.

Promptly at five o'clock, Dick mounted and rode away out of the American encampment.

Dick rode in an easterly direction.

It was his intention to cross the Schuylkill River at Norristown, and proceed to Philadelphia by way of Germantown.

Dick was very familiar with the lay of the country.

He had traveled back and forth between Valley Forge and Philadelphia many times during the winter just past.

He reached Norristown in less than an hour, and, crossing the river, rode southeasterly toward Germantown.

He reached Germantown at a little after seven o'clock.

Dick decided to take supper here.

Stopping in front of a tavern on Main street Dick dismounted.

"Here," he said, handing the halter-strap to a hostler, "take my horse to the stable and give him feed and water."

The hostler led the horse away and Dick entered the tavern.

Dick ordered supper.

The landlord looked at the youth rather dubiously.

Doubtless he was afraid Dick could not or would not pay him for the meal.

This was on account of Dick's dress; he having on, as will be remembered, a rather ragged and rough-looking suit of clothes.

Dick divined what was passing in the landlord's mind.

He reached in his pocket and drew forth some pieces of silver.

"I can pay for what I order, landlord," he said. "Bring along my supper and hurry about it."

The landlord, somewhat abashed, hastened out of the dining-room into the kitchen and gave the order for Dick's supper to be brought to him.

While Dick was eating his supper, half a dozen redcoats entered the combined office and bar-room of the tavern and began drinking at the bar.

Dick caught some of them eyeing him through the open doorway.

It put him on his guard.

"I fear there is trouble ahead for me," he thought. "Those redcoats look like they are ripe for deviltry. Well, forewarned is forearmed. I will keep my eyes on them."

Dick did not let the redcoats know he had taken note of them.

He ate on in the most unconcerned manner imaginable.

He was cool and calm, outwardly.

Within he was somewhat perturbed, however.

He did not like the idea of getting into a difficulty with the redcoats, if it was their intention to force one upon him.

He was bound for Philadelphia on a spying expedition.

Secrecy was essential.

If he got into trouble with those fellows it would draw attention to him.

This would be unwelcome.

He wished to go on his way quietly, and enter the city without attracting attention.

However, if he could not avoid trouble, he could not.

He would do his best to do so.

Then, if it was impossible to avoid trouble, he would make the redcoats wish they had let him alone, if such a thing were possible.



He finished his supper, and, calling the landlord, paid for the meal.

"Tell the hostler to bring my horse around to the front," he said.

"Certainly, my young friend," the landlord replied.

He gave the order to the hostler, and Dick rose from the table and sauntered with seeming carelessness into the office.

The redcoats eyed Dick closely.

They exchanged meaning glances.

Dick saw it all without appearing to do so.

He felt that there was trouble brewing.

But the fellows did not suspect, from his actions, that he was taking note of them.

They did not know they were looking upon the shrewdest patriot spy in the country.

Had they known Dick was Dick Slater, the boy spy, they would have been greatly excited.

His name and fame were well known to them.

They would have been eager to capture the youth.

Dick took note of the fact that three or four of the redcoats presently left the office and went out of doors.

This was a bad sign, he thought.

It strengthened his belief that the redcoats contemplated making him trouble of some kind.

"Well, I'll be ready for you," he said to himself.

It was now about time for the hostler to be out in front with Dick's horse.

The youth set his teeth together firmly and walked out of doors.

He was followed by the redcoats who had not gone out of doors with the first gang.

The hostler was just bringing his horse around to the front of the tavern.

The four British soldiers who had left the tavern ahead of Dick stood near.

Dick stepped forward and took the halter-strap out of the hostler's hand.

As he did so the half dozen redcoats stepped forward and gathered around him.

"That's a pretty nice horse you have there, young fellow," said one.

"I am aware of that fact," replied Dick, in a quiet tone.

Dick knew that he was to have trouble, and did not think it worth while to try to stave it off.

Even as he was replying to the redcoat's remark, Dick was laying his plans of action and deciding upon the course which he would pursue when the clash should come.

"Oho, so you're aware of it, are you?" the redcoat said, sarcastically. "Well, are you also aware of the fact that

it seems very strange that a ragged young chap like you should be riding a magnificent animal like this?"

"The horse isn't mine," said Dick.

"We thought as much;" with a grin. "We didn't expect to hear you acknowledge it, however."

"Oh, you didn't?"

"No."

"The horse belongs to my employer," said Dick. "I am going to the city on an errand for him."

The redcoats laughed in rather a boisterous manner.

"That's a pretty good story, young man, but it won't go down. You've stolen that horse, and you might as well own up to it."

"I have done nothing of the kind," replied Dick. "And if I had, it would be none of your business."

"Oho, the youngster's saucy!" with a laugh. "Well, my young man, your sauciness will avail you nothing. Just hand me that halter-strap."

"Do what?"

"Hand me that halter-strap."

"Hand you the halter-strap?"

"Yes."

"Why should I do that?"

"Because I say so."

"Because you say so?"

"Exactly."

The redcoat swelled out his chest and looked important.

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to take charge of this horse, and keep him till the owner calls for him. Ha! ha! ha!"

The fellow laughed in a manner as much as to say he did not expect the owner would ever call for the horse.

The other redcoats joined in the laughter.

They seemed to think their comrade had uttered a good joke.

"You mean that you intend to steal the horse!" said Dick.

"Oh, no, my boy!" with a laugh. "That would be wicked, and British soldiers never do anything wicked, you know. Ha! ha! ha!"

"I know that if you take this horse it will be stealing," said Dick. "But I do not intend to let you take the horse if I can help it."

"You can't help it. Ha! ha! ha!"

The redcoat held out his hand.

"Give me the halter-strap!" he ordered.

"I protest!" said Dick. "You have no right to take the horse."

"Maybe not; but we have the might. Hand over the halter-strap or you'll wish you had, young fellow!"



Dick saw it would do no good to talk longer. The redcoats intended to take the horse. Dick was determined that they should not. He would have avoided trouble had it been possible, but as it was not possible, he decided to take the initiative. He suddenly uttered a peculiar, quavering whistle, and bounded past the redcoats with a panther-like leap. Then something happened.

## CHAPTER II.

### IN THE QUAKER CITY.

The whistle which Dick had given utterance to was a signal to Major.

The noble horse was as intelligent, almost, as a human being.

At times, when having nothing else to do, Dick had trained Major to do a number of tricks.

While doing this, the thought had come to the youth that it would be a good idea to teach the horse to do a few things which might be of assistance to him when threatened by danger.

As we have said, the whistle was a signal, and the instant he heard the whistle, Major proceeded to perform the feat which the signal stood for.

Major began whirling around and around, and alternately kicked out with his hind-legs and reared up and pawed and struck out with his front ones.

In less time than it takes to tell it, he had knocked down every one of the six redcoats.

They had been taken entirely by surprise.

It had all been done so quickly that they had no time to get out of the way.

As soon as the redcoats were down, Dick gave vent to another whistle.

It was another signal.

Instantly Major ceased his cavortings.

He trotted to where Dick stood.

Instantly Dick leaped into the saddle.

"Forward, Major!" he cried. "The coast is clear, and we will go on our way rejoicing."

Major struck off down the street at a gallop.

Dick turned in his saddle and looked back.

The redcoats were struggling to their feet.

When they saw Dick riding away, they gave utterance to yells of anger.

They shook their fists in Dick's direction, and then ran swiftly toward the stable.

"They are going to get their horses and give chase," said Dick to himself. "Well, let them. I don't think they'll catch Major."

He waved his hand and gave vent to a shout of defiance.

"Come on, my redcoat friends!" he cried out, in a loud voice. "Come on, and catch me if you can!"

Dick did not urge Major into a run.

He felt that there was no need of it.

He had no fears that the redcoats could catch him.

He was not averse to having them chase him.

It would give him pleasure to let the redcoats give chase, draw up fairly close to him, and then tantalize them by running away from them.

So Dick rode onward at an ordinary gallop.

When he had gone about a mile and a half, he looked back and saw the redcoats coming over the brow of the hill, a third of a mile behind him.

The redcoats gave utterance to a yell, as they caught sight of Dick.

They lashed their horses fiercely, and came down the slope with their animals on the dead run.

"They're coming, Major," said Dick, quietly, just as if he were speaking to a companion. "I guess we'll have to increase our speed a little and give them a chase."

Instantly Major increased his speed and moved forward at a sweeping gallop.

The magnificent animal was not exerting himself in the least, and was not yet really running; but even so, he was covering the ground almost as rapidly as were the horses of the redcoats.

Dick permitted the redcoats to draw nearer and nearer.

Presently they were within perhaps two hundred yards of him.

Looking back, Dick saw that the fellows had drawn pistols.

"So that's your game, is it?" he murmured. "You would like to sneak up close to me and shoot me, wouldn't you? Well, I'll see to it that you don't succeed in doing so."

Dick spoke a word to Major, and the noble animal responded instantly.

He leaped forward with the speed of an arrow shot from a bow.

Dick glanced back over his shoulder.

Major was leaving the redcoats behind almost as rapidly as if they were standing still.

Doubtless the wonderful burst of speed was a surprise to the redcoats.

They had thought, probably, that Dick's horse was going



at his best speed before, and that they would soon overtake him.

Now they realized their mistake.

They gave vent to wild shouts of anger and disappointment.

In desperation they fired off their pistols, in the faint hope that Dick might be struck by one of their bullets.

Dick was too far away, however.

The bullets did not carry up that far.

They struck the ground many yards behind the youth.

Dick took off his hat and waved it, at the same time giving vent to a defiant shout.

"Good-by!" he cried, in his clear, ringing voice, easily heard by the redcoats. "I can't wait for you any longer; you are so slow, it would lose me too much time."

Major quickly drew away from the pursuing horses, and the redcoats, seeing it was useless to try to overhaul such a fleet-footed animal, slackened the speed of their own horses to a moderate gallop.

They had given up the chase.

Dick slackened Major's speed to a gallop as soon as he saw the redcoats had given up the pursuit.

"There's no need of your tiring yourself out, Major," he said. "You may have to bring all your speed and stamina into requisition before we get back to the patriot encampment, and you might as well save yourself."

Dick reached Philadelphia at nightfall.

He rode to a livery stable kept by a patriot.

Dick had left his horse there at various other times.

After giving instructions to have Major well taken care of, Dick left the livery stable and walked down the street.

"I wish I knew where General Clinton's headquarters are," he thought.

And then the thought struck him that in all probability General Clinton would occupy the same quarters that General Howe had occupied.

Dick knew where this was.

It was a two and a half story stone house on High Street.

Dick made his way in that direction.

He did not move swiftly.

The reason for this was that Dick decided it might be profitable to go slow and keep his ears open.

It was a lovely moonlight night.

The streets were thronged.

The people, both citizens and soldiers, were out in full force.

There were many groups, and wherever there was a group, talk was indulged in.

Nine times out of ten the change of commander-in-chief,

and the effect it would have on the war and things in general, was the subject under discussion.

Dick made it a point to pause near these groups and listen to the conversations.

He felt that in this way he might acquire some valuable information.

He did not expect to learn all that he wished to, but every little that he could pick up would help.

He spent an hour or more in this way and picked up number of items of information.

Some of the soldiers seemed to think the change of commander-in-chief would result in the good of the British cause, while others upheld Howe and declared that if he had been let alone he would have brought the war to a close sooner than Clinton would be able to do it.

As Dick was making his way slowly along the street, he was rudely jostled by some redcoats who came out of the saloon.

One of the fellows who bumped against Dick gave the youth a push, and growled out:

"Get out of the way, you fool! What do you mean by getting in a gentleman's way, anyhow?"

Then as he got a good view of Dick's face, he uttered an exclamation:

"By Jove, fellows!" he cried. "This is the young scoundrel we had our trouble with up at Germantown a couple of hours ago. Now we can settle with him, and settle with him in full!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### IN BRITISH HEADQUARTERS.

Dick recognized the fellows at a glance.

They were the six redcoats whom he had encountered at Germantown, and who had tried to take Major away from him.

He had been recognized also.

He knew that he was in for trouble.

The redcoats were about half drunk.

They were in a good condition for making trouble.

They were undoubtedly sore both mentally and physically as a result of their encounter with Dick, and their upsetting in such a summary manner by Major.

Dick would much rather not have encountered the fellows.

Now that he had, however, he would stand his ground.

The redcoats were too drunk to be fully themselves in an encounter.



The youth believed he would be a match for the six. He had not much time for thought. When the redcoat uttered his exclamation, the others crowded forward to get a look at Dick. "It's him, sure enough!" cried one. "The very chap!" from another. "Go for the young scoundrel, fellows!" from a third. "Let's give him a good thrashing." The redcoats rushed forward in a body. They began striking at Dick rapidly and fiercely. One would have thought that the odds of six to one would have been overpowering. But such did not prove to be the case. The redcoats were half drunk and not fully at themselves. They got in each other's way. A few of the blows intended for Dick were received by the strikers' comrades. The redcoats were dealing with a remarkable youth. Dick had been engaged in such combats so often that he knew just what to do. He was as quick as lightning and as active as a cat. He leaped forward and backward and sidewise. He was here, there and everywhere. And all the time he was dealing swift, strong blows, every one of which went straight to the mark. One after another the redcoats were knocked down. As is usual with such cases, a crowd soon gathered. The sympathies of the crowd were with Dick. Every time he floored a redcoat he was cheered to the echo. "Good for you, my boy!" "That's the way to do it!" "That was a beautiful stroke!" "The young man knows how to fight." "He is certainly a wonderful youth." Such were the remarks of the spectators. The remarks, needless to say, did not tend to soothe the feelings of the redcoats. They muttered curses and threats. They tried their best to knock the youth senseless. But to no avail. He was too quick and active for them. They could not touch him. At any rate, they could not strike him a blow that did him any damage. Dick knocked each and every one of the redcoats down three or four times. This rough treatment sobered them pretty effectually. They were so badly battered, up, however, and so weak-

ened that, even though sobered, they were in no condition to do Dick harm.

Realizing this, they finally desisted from the attack and slunk away down the street, muttering threats as they went.

Dick was sorry that the encounter had taken place.

This was something which he did not desire.

As a patriot spy in the British stronghold, he naturally wished to attract as little attention as possible.

It would be difficult to do much in the spying line with the eyes of scores of people upon him.

He had had no choice, however.

The encounter had been forced upon him.

He would now have to do the best he could.

The first thing for him to do was to get out of the crowd and away.

He began making his way quietly through the crowd.

He was greeted on every hand by remarks of one kind or another—complimentary in the main—and by questions as to who he was, where he was from, and so forth.

Dick made very brief replies, and got out of the crowd and away as quickly as possible.

As soon as he was clear of the crowd he made his way down the street to the next corner.

Turning here he made his way across to the next street.

Again he turned and made his way up the street.

This street was not so thronged with people as the other one had been.

It suited Dick better to have it so.

He made his way along for a distance of three or four blocks.

Then he turned a corner, walked two blocks and came out upon High Street.

Dick knew where he was now.

He was within two blocks of the house that had been occupied by General Howe during the past winter.

Dick walked up to the next corner.

He paused and pondered a while.

He wished to enter the house in question.

But how was he to accomplish it?

That was the question.

A difficult one, too.

The fact that the task would be difficult of accomplishment never had any deterring effect on Dick, however.

It made him all the more determined to succeed.

It did not take him long to decide upon a course of action.

Dick was aware that a narrow alley cut the block in two.

Turning down the side street, he made his way to the mouth of the alley and entered it.

He walked up the alley until even with the house that



had been used as headquarters for General Howe, and then he stopped.

He stood there but an instant.

Then he leaped over the back-yard fence, walked briskly across the yard and rapped upon the back door.

Dick waited a few moments and no one having responded, he rapped again.

This time he heard steps within.

Then the door opened.

A woman who looked like she might be the cook, or possibly the housekeeper, stood before Dick.

"Who are you and what do you want?" she asked.

"I am an orphan, lady," Dick said. "I came to the city three days ago in the hope that I might be able to get work. I have been unable to do so and as I have no money, I have been unable to buy any food to-day. I haven't had anything to eat since yesterday, and am nearly starved. Would you be so kind, lady, as to give me something to eat?"

"Why, certainly," said the woman, promptly and good-naturedly. "You shan't go away from here hungry, if I can help it. Just wait here a few moments and I'll bring you something."

"Thank you, lady," said Dick.

The door opened upon a hallway.

The woman opened the door at her left hand and stepped through into what was evidently a kitchen.

Now was Dick's opportunity.

"It seems hardly right to take advantage of a woman's good-heartedness," thought Dick; "but all is fair in war, and I must get into this house in some way."

As he thought thus, Dick stepped lightly across the threshold.

He tiptoed along the hallway.

He made no more noise than a ghost.

As it was dark in the hallway, he had to go slow and feel his way along.

The darkness would be to Dick's benefit, also, however, as the woman would be unable to see him.

Dick had traversed perhaps half the length of the hall when he heard the woman emerge from the kitchen.

A light shone through the partially open doorway and Dick could see the woman, while he himself was in no danger of being seen.

He heard the woman utter an exclamation:

"Why, he's gone! I wonder where he can be?"

The woman looked outside for Dick, and then came back in and closed the door.

"It's very strange," he heard her say. "I wonder if he could have slipped into the house?"

She went back into the kitchen, and Dick, fearing that she might return with a light to make search for him, made his way along the hallway as rapidly as possible until he came to the stairway leading to the second floor.

"I'll go upstairs and see what I can find up there," thought Dick.

He cautiously made his way up the stairs.

At the head of the stairs he paused and listened.

Was it imagination, or did he hear voices?

He listened more closely still.

Yes, he was confident that he heard voices.

It was just a faint murmur, but Dick was sure he could not be mistaken.

He believed, too, that the owners of the voices were in a room on the same floor with himself.

He decided to investigate.

He made his way gently along the hallway.

He had no doubt that a hall extended clear to the extreme rear of the house on this floor, the same as it did below.

Dick moved slowly and walked on his tip-toes so as to make no noise.

He paused occasionally and listened.

He found that the farther he went, the plainer became the sound of the voices.

"I was right," thought Dick. "They must be in a room somewhere close at hand."

It was quite dark in the hall.

He had passed several doors, as he could tell by feeling.

At each door he had paused and listened at the keyhole.

As yet he had not found the room in which were the owners of the voices.

He was sure he soon would find it, however.

This proved to be the case.

Dick knew they were in the next room that he would come to even before he reached it.

He saw a faint streak of light shining out into the hall.

Dick knew that the light came through the keyhole.

He approached very carefully.

It would not do to make a noise now.

Reaching the door, he bent over, and, applying his eye to the keyhole, looked through.

The sight which met his gaze caused his heart to give a throb of delight.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DICK TEACHES A REDCOAT A LESSON.

In the room were a number of British officers.

Within the range of Dick's vision were General Corn



wallis and two others, one of whom was General Clinton, Dick was sure.

Dick took his eye away from the keyhole and placed his ear there.

"Yes, gentlemen," he heard a voice say, "I have orders to vacate Philadelphia at the earliest possible moment."

"And where are we ordered to go?" asked a voice.

"To New York," was the reply.

"But why leave Philadelphia?" another voice asked.

"Why? It is simple enough. You are aware that war has been declared between England and France, are you not?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"And that France has sent a fleet, which is even now on its way to America, to aid the rebels in their fight against our good King George?"

"Yes, I am aware of that, also."

"Well, then, you should see the necessity for evacuating Philadelphia and concentrating our troops at New York. As soon as the French fleet gets over here it would be impossible for us to get supply ships past them and up the Delaware to this city. We must go to New York."

"You are undoubtedly right, Sir Henry," said a voice which Dick recognized as belonging to General Cornwallis.

"We must go to New York. Will we go by land or water?"

"By land. I am going to make it appear, however, as if we intended going by water, so as to deceive that old fox, Washington. By the time he finds out to the contrary, we will be across the river and miles away on our march across New Jersey. We will have such a start that it will be impossible for him to overtake us in case he should desire to or try to do so."

"I think your plan a very good one, your excellency. How long will it take you to get ready to start on the march?"

"I hardly know. There is an immense amount of work to be done, however. It will take from two to four weeks to get ready."

As may be supposed, Dick was delighted.

He had got there just in time.

He had already learned enough so that Washington would know exactly what to do.

Still, as he was here, he thought he might as well learn all that he could.

So he kept his post and listened to the conversation of the British officers.

"So you're going to fool that old fox of a Washington, are you?" thought Dick, smiling to himself. "Well, we'll see about that. Unless I am mightily mistaken, when you

start on your march across New Jersey, you'll find that same 'fox of a Washington' close at hand."

Dick listened to the conversation of the officers with interest.

He had already heard the essential facts and he thought he might as well hear the details.

The officers discussed these matters freely.

Of course they had no suspicion that a patriot spy was listening to their every word.

Had they suspected that such was the case, there would have been an uproar indeed.

But why should they suspect it?

The thought that a patriot spy would have the audacity, would be so daring, so utterly reckless as to venture right into the headquarters of the British commander-in-chief never occurred to them.

Dick was still listening when he was startled by hearing footsteps in the hallway below.

He rose quickly and noiselessly to his feet.

As he did so he heard the front door open.

It closed again, quickly, and Dick heard footsteps ascending the stairs.

"I must get away from here," he thought.

He did not dare try to get downstairs.

He took the only course open to him.

He stole softly back, along the hall, toward the rear of the building.

He felt his way along, and when he came to a door he tried the knob.

The door opened.

Dick entered quickly.

He was none too soon in getting in, for the next moment the heads of a woman and a man appeared above the level of the hallway.

The woman was the one who had been the means of letting Dick enter the house.

The man with her was evidently a British officer.

The woman carried a candle.

They paused in front of the door opening into the room occupied by the other officers.

Dick heard the woman knock on the door.

Then he heard the door opened.

"A messenger to General Clinton," Dick heard spoken in the voice of the woman who had unwittingly let him enter the house.

Dick heard the sound of shuffling feet, then the door went shut, after which he heard lighter footsteps approaching along the hall.

"The woman is coming along the hallway in this direc-



tion!" thought Dick. "Jove! what if she should be coming to this room!"

The youth stepped across to the wall and began feeling his way along it.

Presently he came to a door.

He opened it, with a sigh of relief.

He stepped through the doorway and felt about him.

He found that he was in a closet.

There were articles of clothing hanging in the closet.

Dick thought that he might hide behind these, if necessary.

To his relief, however, the woman did not enter the room.

He heard her go on down the hallway.

Dick listened, and heard a door open and close.

He began to ponder the situation.

He had entered the British headquarters, had listened to a council of war, had acquired some very valuable information; but now, how was he to get out of the house without being detected?

This would be a difficult matter, he was sure.

It would be a terrible thing if he should be detected now.

He had secured information which would be of inestimable value to General Washington.

He must take it to the commander-in-chief.

Dick made up his mind that the quicker he got to work the better it would be for him.

Having so decided, he lost no time.

He left the closet and stole across the room.

He opened the door, and, after listening for a few moments, stepped out into the hall.

He stole along the hall.

He walked on his tip-toes, so as to make no noise.

He passed the room in which the British officers were holding their council, and made his way onward till he came to the head of the stairs.

He made his way down the stairs with as much speed as was compatible with safety.

He decided to leave the house by the same door through which he had entered it.

He made his way back along the hallway.

It was very dark, and he had to feel his way.

He finally reached the rear door, however.

As he did so he heard the sound of footsteps overhead, and toward the front of the house.

"The council of war is ended," thought Dick; "and the officers are taking their leave. Jove! I must get out of here before they get downstairs. It would be terrible if they should catch me here, like a rat in a trap!"

Dick felt eagerly about.

He found the key in the lock and turned it.

The door was bolted, also, and the youth soon found the bolt and pushed it back.

Then he turned the knob and pulled.

The door came open!

A feeling of relief came over the brave youth.

He glanced back over his shoulder.

The officers were coming down the stairs.

"I must get out of here, quick!" he thought, and then he stepped quickly through the doorway, out into the back yard.

He pulled the door shut.

Then he made his way across the yard to the fence, and leaped over into the alley.

Dick felt like shouting for joy.

He had succeeded beyond his most sanguine expectations.

He had secured the information which General Washington had wished him to secure; now to get back to him with it.

Dick did not think he would have much trouble in doing this.

He believed the most difficult part of his work lay behind him.

It was always a difficult and dangerous task to secure information; it was seldom a difficult or dangerous task to get back to the patriot army with it, once it was secured.

Still the youth kept his eyes wide open.

He realized that he was in the stronghold of the enemy. Philadelphia was full of redcoats.

The streets still swarmed with them.

He might get into trouble yet before getting out of the city.

He would not, if he could avoid it.

He had too much at stake.

So he was on his guard as he walked along.

He made his way down the alley and emerged onto the street.

He walked half a block and turned up another street.

So far he had escaped notice.

There were a good many people on this street.

This did not bother Dick, however.

He was well disguised.

No one would think he was a "rebel" spy, he was sure.

When Dick had gone up the street three or four blocks he turned to the left and entered another and less frequented street.

The only persons that he saw near were a British soldier and a young lady.



They were a few yards in advance of Dick and going in the same direction.

This street was poorly lighted, but the moon was shining brightly, which enabled Dick to see the couple quite plainly.

Dick was walking faster than the couple in question, and he soon drew close up behind them.

Dick heard what the soldier was saying.

The fellow was importuning the young lady for a kiss.

The young lady steadfastly refused.

Dick noted that there was an angry tone to the redcoat's voice, and he slackened his speed and walked slowly, keeping a few yards behind the two.

"I do believe those redcoats are the most impudent scoundrels in the world. I'll just wait a minute and see how this affair turns out."

Thus thought Dick.

Somehow the tone of the redcoat's voice made him think that there would be trouble soon.

It so proved.

The redcoat kept importuning the young lady for a kiss and she kept on refusing; and when they were about the middle of the block, the redcoat suddenly threw his arms around the girl and cried, almost fiercely:

"Well, my stubborn young lady, if you won't give me a kiss, I shall have to take it!"

A cry escaped the girl.

"Release me, sir!" she cried, in a sweet, though tremulous voice. "I thought you were a gentleman!"

The redcoat laughed.

"I don't profess to be a gentleman, Miss Louise," he said; "but I am a man, and——"

"A liar, a scoundrel and a coward!" cried a clear, ringing voice. "Unhand the young lady, you cowardly redcoat, or it will be the worse for you!"

It was Dick's voice.

A cry of joy escaped the girl.

A curse escaped the redcoat.

"Unhand the young lady, I say!"

Dick's tone was fierce and threatening.

The redcoat released the girl and turned upon Dick with the ferocity of a maddened animal.

"You meddling scoundrel!" he cried, hoarsely. "I'll knock your head off!"

He leaped forward as he spoke.

He evidently meant to do what he had threatened.

He was soon to find that this was to be no easy task.

He struck at Dick, rapidly, fiercely.

He evidently intended to make short work of the youth.

But he had taken a bigger contract than he knew.

He was up against an opponent remarkable for his ability to protect himself.

Indeed, Dick was usually able to do a great deal more than merely protect himself.

The redcoat soon found this out.

After he had made four or five wild passes at Dick, failing to come anywhere near hitting the youth, he received a blow fair between the eyes and went down upon the hard pavement with a thump.

"There! See how you like that!" said Dick, grimly.

The girl stood near, with clasped hands, watching the combat; and when the redcoat went down, a sigh of relief escaped her.

She did not say a word, however.

The redcoat lay still where he had fallen.

He was not knocked senseless, but was somewhat dazed.

He stared up at the star-spangled sky and blinked.

Evidently, for the time being, he did not know what had happened to him.

He remained in this condition only a few moments, however.

Then it all came back to him.

He gave vent to a hoarse growl of anger and scrambled hastily to his feet.

Again he leaped toward Dick.

He had failed the first time, but this time he would not fail.

This was what he told himself.

But he soon discovered his mistake.

Dick did not waste any time.

He met the fellow more than half way.

Out shot first his left and then his right fist.

The left fist took the fellow in the chest with almost the force of a mule's kick, and the right fist landed fairly on the point of the jaw.

Down went the redcoat with a crash.

The force of the blow on the jaw, and the jar from striking the pavement, had rendered him temporarily unconscious.

Dick turned to the young lady.

"He will not molest you further, miss," said Dick. "Shall I escort you to your home?"

## CHAPTER V.

### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" AT WORK.

"If you please, sir," the girl said. And then she added, with a shuddering glance at the prostrate form of the redcoat:



"I thank you, oh, ever so much, kind sir, for what you have done for me!"

"Don't say a thing about it, miss," said Dick, earnestly; "I would be less than a man if I were to pass by and make no effort to protect a lady from insult. Shall we go?"

"If you please; we will go before—before he——"

"There is nothing to be feared from him," said Dick, reassuringly. "However, we may as well be going."

As he spoke, Dick offered the young lady his arm.

The girl hesitated and glanced at Dick's ragged clothing.

The youth noticed it.

"You need not hesitate, miss," he said, with a smile; "my clothing is not of fashionable make, I admit; but it is not the kind I am accustomed to wearing. This ragged suit is merely a disguise to be worn only temporarily."

"I pray you will pardon me," the girl said, in a sweet, half-pleading voice; "what matters it what kind of clothing one wears when he has proven himself a true man and a gentleman, as you have just done."

As she spoke the girl took Dick's arm.

They moved quickly away and up the street.

It proved to be several blocks to the girl's home.

When they reached there, Dick bade the young lady goodbye and hastened onward.

Ten minutes later he reached the livery stable where he had left his horse.

Five minutes after that, mounted on Major's back, he was riding out of the city.

"Well," thought Dick, "I have done first rate. I have secured the information which General Washington wished me to secure. Now to get to him with it."

Dick did not anticipate much trouble in accomplishing this.

He had accomplished the most dangerous part of the work, he was sure.

He urged Major into a gallop.

It was a long, sweeping gallop, which carried them over the ground rapidly.

"We'll be in the patriot camp by midnight," said Dick to himself.

And so it proved.

It lacked yet a few minutes of midnight when Dick rode into the patriot encampment at Valley Forge.

As Dick rode past the house occupied by General Washington, he saw a light burning within.

"The commander-in-chief is still up," thought Dick. "I'll hasten back and report to him to-night."

Dick rode to his quarters.

Leaving Major in an old stable near by, Dick hastened back to General Washington's headquarters.

He knocked upon the door.

Presently it was opened.

An orderly stood before him.

"Is the commander-in-chief still up?" asked Dick.

"He is," was the reply.

"Tell him Dick Slater is here. I think he will see me."

"Come in, Dick!" called a voice.

It was the voice of the commander-in-chief.

His room was in the front of the house, and he had heard what Dick had said.

A few moments later Dick stood before General Washington.

"Be seated, Dick," the commander-in-chief said.

Dick sat down.

General Washington looked at Dick eagerly and inquiringly.

"Well, Dick, what news?" he asked. "Did you succeed in securing the information which I sent you to secure?"

"I did, your excellency."

"I was sure you would succeed," the commander-in-chief declared. "Now go ahead, Dick, and tell me what you have learned."

"Very well, your excellency. Firstly, the British troops are to evacuate Philadelphia."

Washington nodded.

"I thought as much," he said. "How soon will their movement take place?"

"As soon as they can get ready. General Clinton says, however, that it would take from two to four weeks to get ready."

Washington nodded again.

"Good!" he said. "That will give us plenty of time to get ready also; but where are the British going, to New York?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"I thought so. How will they go, by land or water?"

"By land. General Clinton is going to make it appear that they are going by water, however, with the intention of deceiving you and enabling him to get a good start on the march across New Jersey."

"So that is his scheme, is it?"

"It is, sir."

"Well, it is a scheme which, thanks to you, Dick, he will not succeed. Having advance information as to his intention, we shall be enabled to checkmate this movement of General Clinton's."

General Washington was well pleased.



The information which Dick had secured would undoubtedly prove to be invaluable.

He was aware that General Clinton was a more energetic officer than General Howe had proved himself to be.

He had thought it possible that General Clinton might make a desperate attempt to destroy the patriot army at stroke, and now that he had learned the plans of the British commander-in-chief he felt greatly relieved.

His mind was now at ease.

He knew what General Clinton intended to do, and could shape his plans accordingly.

"There is one thing more, your excellency," said Dick; "it was decided in the council of war which I was so fortunate to overhear that parties are to be sent out to scour the country for miles around Philadelphia for the purpose of gathering up horses and wagons. These are to be used for conveying food and supplies in the trip across New Jersey. This will be inaugurated at once, and now, in this connection, I am going to ask you a favor."

"What is it, Dick?"

There was a twinkle in the commander-in-chief's eyes.

He evidently suspected what the favor was which Dick was going to ask at his hands.

"It is this, your excellency: That you grant me, for the two or three weeks to elapse before the British leave Philadelphia, a sort of roving commission, giving me permission to take my company of "Liberty Boys" and go after those parties of redcoats who come out into the country in search of horses and wagons."

There was an eager look on Dick's face.

It was evident that he thought this would be pleasant work.

General Washington understood Dick thoroughly.

"You have my permission, Dick," he said. "The only provision I will make is that you return to camp at least once in every forty-eight hours. I would not require this, were it not that I think it possible I might wish to send you to Philadelphia on a spying expedition, and I would not know where to look for you."

"Oh, thank you!" said Dick. "We can easily return to camp that often, as we will be from ten to fifteen miles away during most of the time."

"Very well, Dick."

Dick remained perhaps half an hour longer.

He told General Washington in detail everything he had learned regarding the intentions of the British.

Then he bade the commander-in-chief good-night, and, taking his way to his quarters, lay down and was soon asleep.

The "Liberty Boys" plied Dick with questions next morning.

When they learned that the British were to evacuate Philadelphia they were well pleased.

"I tell you the redcoats are getting scared!" declared Bob Estabrook. "They're beginning to be afraid of us."

"The fact that France has acknowledged our independence and sent a fleet over to help us, has alarmed them," said Mark Morrison. "I feel that we will yet be free!"

"I think that you are right, Mark," said Dick. "The British are making but very little headway, and I feel confident that it is only a question of time when we will win our independence."

When Dick told the youths that the commander-in-chief had granted them permission to go out and harass the parties of redcoats which would come out into the country to secure horses and wagons, they were delighted.

"Hurrah!" cried Bob. "That will give us a chance to get in some of our fine work."

"So it will," agreed Mark Morrison.

"We are the fellows who can do things up brown!" declared Sam Sunderland.

"When will we begin this work, Dick?" asked Bob.

"At once."

"To-day?"

"This very morning."

"Hurrah!" cried Bob. "That suits me, I tell you. I'm tired of being cooped up here. I want to get out and circulate around."

The other youths all said the same.

"All right," said Dick; "get to work; get ready; the quicker you are ready the sooner we will go."

Instantly all was bustle and confusion.

The "Liberty Boys" made haste to get ready.

They wished to be out and away.

An hour later they rode out of the encampment and away toward the east.

They were across the Schuylkill in less than an hour.

They bore away toward the southeast.

They were headed straight toward Philadelphia.

Their general course was toward Germantown, also, as it would not be out of their way to go through that town.

They did not keep to the main road.

They were in search of redcoats, and they made incursions into the country, first to the right and then to the left.

To their disappointment they had not gotten sight of a redcoat when they reached Germantown.

It was now only about six miles to Philadelphia.

"Surely we will run across a party of the redcoats be-



tween here and the city," said Bob, lugubriously; "I'm disappointed in those fellows, to tell the truth. They are not nearly so enterprising as I had hoped they would be."

"Oh, I think we will find some of them before the day ends, Bob," said Dick; "it is a bit early for them to be out."

"They must be late risers, then."

They did not stop at Germantown only long enough to ask if any redcoats had been seen in the vicinity.

As many of the citizens of the place were Tories, however, it is doubtful whether the youths would have received the information even had the citizens known where there were some redcoats.

The youths rode onward.

A mile beyond Germantown, they found their game.

As they approached a house they saw a score of redcoats in the barnyard.

The redcoats were hitching horses to a wagon.

"There they are, boys!" said Dick. "Forward, and give it to them as soon as we are in range!"

The youths did not utter a shout.

The redcoats had not seen them, and they did not wish to warn them that they were in danger.

The redcoats heard the thunder of the hoofs, however, and in an instant they mounted their horses and raced out of the barnyard into the road, and fled up it at the top of their horses' speed.

Then the "Liberty Boys" yelled!

They gave vent to wild shouts and cheers, and raced down the road after the fleeing redcoats.

## CHAPTER VI.

### LIVELY WORK.

The redcoats evidently appreciated the fact that they were outnumbered five to one.

The manner in which they belabored their horses would seem to indicate that such was the case.

They acted as if they thought their only hope of safety lay in reaching Philadelphia ahead of their pursuers.

It is probable that they were not so very far out of the way in their reckoning.

The "Liberty Boys" undoubtedly meant business.

They raced up the road in the wake of the fleeing redcoats like a hurricane.

They drew slowly closer and closer to the fugitives.

Presently they were within pistol shot of the redcoats.

They drew their pistols and began firing.

They saw two or three men reel in their saddles, but none fell off their horses.

The distance was too great for them to do much damage, however, and Dick told the youths to reserve their fire till they were closer.

A stern chase is always a long chase, they say.

It proved so in this instance.

The "Liberty Boys" drew closer and closer to the fugitives, but it was slow work.

Had they had ten miles to go instead of only about five, the youths would have been enabled to overhaul and capture the entire party; but, as it was, it soon became evident that the redcoats would reach Philadelphia before they could be overhauled.

The "Liberty Boys" were so daring, so audacious that they actually chased the fleeing redcoats into the city!

They did not stop until they themselves were within the limits of the city.

Then, seeing that they could not capture the redcoats, the youths fired a volley from their pistols and gave up the chase, turning around and galloping easily out of the city.

"That'll stir them up," chuckled Bob; "as soon as those fellows get to headquarters and report, there'll be a regiment out here searching for us!"

"Let them come!" smiled Dick. "They'll have hard work catching us."

Bob was right in his statement.

When the party of redcoats reached headquarters and told their story, the excitement became intense.

The British officers could hardly believe the story that a party of "rebels" had chased their comrades right into the city, but when one of the fellows who had been in the party said that he had recognized their pursuers to be the youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76," the doubt vanished.

All knew of Dick Slater and his band of "Liberty Boys."

All had heard many wonderful stories regarding the daring of the youths in question.

It was quite possible that they would dare chase a party of British into the city.

This must not be permitted, however.

Such doings must be stopped.

General Clinton ordered that a large force should go at once and give chase to the insolent "rebels."

There was a quick saddling of horses.

Twenty minutes later a force consisting of at least three hundred men rode out of the city and up the road in the direction of Germantown.



Some of the men who had been in the party which had been chased were along as guides.

The party rode swiftly.

The redcoats were eager to get sight of the audacious "rebels."

But they were dealing with some as shrewd youths as could have been found in a year's search.

Dick did not intend that the redcoats should get a chance to attack his party with an overpowering force.

So after galloping back out of Philadelphia, the "Liberty Boys" had gone only about a mile on the main road.

Then they had turned to the left and had entered the timber bordering on the Schuylkill River.

As soon as they were deep enough into the timber so as to be in no danger of being seen from the road, they came to a halt.

They dismounted and tied their horses.

Then Dick and Bob climbed into the top of a big tree.

They had a good view of the road from the treetop.

They could see the city, also.

They had been in the tree not more than fifteen minutes when Bob suddenly uttered an exclamation.

"Yonder they come, Dick!" he cried. "I told you they would come out and give chase. It was just about like sticking a stick into a hornet's nest to chase those fellows into the city."

"Right, Bob. Well, I'm glad we did something to wake them up. They've been having altogether too easy a time."

The youths watched the approaching body of redcoats with interest.

Closer and closer it came.

The redcoats were riding at a gallop.

They were eager to catch sight of and if possible over-haul the little band of audacious "rebels."

Onward they came.

Presently they were even with the youths.

Having no suspicion that their would-be victims were close at hand, the redcoats swept onward.

Dick and Bob watched the party until it disappeared from sight over the brow of a hill a half mile distant.

They were about to descend from the tree when Dick suddenly said:

"Hold on, Bob; wait a minute."

"What is it, Dick?"

"Look yonder, Bob, toward the city."

Bob looked.

"Another band of redcoats!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, Bob; and a small band, too. It's another gang going out to steal horses and wagons."

"You're right, Dick; here's another chance to get in

some more of our fine work. Jove, what fun! We can go down, head those fellows off and chase them back into their lair while that other gang are chasing their shadows."

"Right, Bob; let's hurry down and get ready for action."

The youths hastily descended from the tree.

When the other "Liberty Boys" learned that there was another small party of redcoats coming they were delighted.

Action was what they liked above all other things, and here would be a chance for plenty of action.

To head off the coming party of redcoats, chase them back into the city and then get back into the timber and out of the way of the large party of redcoats, which would doubtless return when they heard the firing, would call for lively work.

The youths led their horses to the edge of the timber, mounted and sat there awaiting the coming of the British.

It was about a quarter of a mile from the edge of the timber to the road.

It was Dick's purpose to let the redcoats get exactly opposite and then charge them.

This course was followed out.

The British were soon at a point opposite where the "Liberty Boys" sat on their horses and at the command from Dick, the youths rode out from the timber at a gallop.

They dashed straight toward the party of British.

The redcoats gave utterance to cries of surprise and fright, and, whirling their horses, started pellmell back toward Philadelphia.

With wild yells and shouts, the "Liberty Boys" gave chase.

This kind of work was just to their liking.

They enjoyed it hugely.

More to add interest to the affair than with any expectation of doing much damage, the youths fired a volley from their pistols.

They did not expect to kill any of the redcoats.

Nor did they do so.

They were sure they wounded two or three, however, and this was something.

It was rather a short chase, it being scarcely more than a mile to the city, but it was an exceedingly lively one while it lasted.

The redcoats must have thought so anyway.

The way they belabored their horses was a caution.

They seemed determined to reach the city ahead of their pursuers if such a thing were possible.

They succeeded.

The "Liberty Boys," as in the former instance, paused



just within the edge of the city limits, and, firing a parting volley, turned their horses and galloped back up the road.

They were delighted.

They were having more sport than they had anticipated when they left Valley Forge.

It was scarcely so funny for the redcoats, but that did not count, of course.

The youths rode rapidly.

They were sure that the large party which had gone toward Germantown in search of them would hear the firing of the pistols and return.

The "Liberty Boys" were soon at the point where they had been hidden in the timber.

They turned aside from the road and entered the timber once more at the same spot.

They had not much more than done so before the party of redcoats came in sight over the brow of the hill.

They were coming at a rapid pace, their horses being urged to a swift gallop.

The "Liberty Boys" watched the party go by and on toward the city.

"They will learn what has taken place as soon as they reach the city," said Dick; "then they will be back here, in hot haste, to see if we are still here."

"I suppose we won't be here, eh, Dick?" remarked Bob.

"Well, I don't know, Bob," said Dick, reflectively; "we might remain here and give them a good fight; but, on the whole, I think it will be better to avoid an encounter. We are out for the purpose of harassing the small parties, not to give battle to parties three or four times larger than our own. I know what we will do. Come on, fellows."

The redcoats were now out of sight in the direction of Philadelphia, and Dick led the way out of the timber and back to the road.

The "Liberty Boys" rode up the road in the opposite direction from Philadelphia.

They kept on in this direction for about a mile.

Then Dick turned into a narrow, winding road, which led westward through the timber.

"Where are you bound for, Dick?" asked Bob.

"For the ford across the Schuylkill, Bob."

"Ah, I understand!" exclaimed Bob. "You are going over on the other side of the river."

"Yes; there are doubtless small parties over there, the same as on this side of the river."

"Without doubt, Dick."

The "Liberty Boys" made their way along this winding road a distance of perhaps two miles.

Then they suddenly came out upon the shore of the Schuylkill.

It was quite wide here, but shallow.

It was fordable.

The youths rode into the water till it was up to the animals' breasts, and then paused to let the horses drink.

When the animals had drunk all they cared to, the youths rode onward toward the other bank of the river.

The water was at its deepest near the middle of the river, but even there it was not much above the breasts of the horses.

They were not forced to swim.

It got shallower rapidly after the middle of the river was passed.

The youths were within about seventy-five yards of the farther shore when Dick's quick eyes caught a flash of scarlet among the trees.

He took the alarm instantly.

"Danger!" he cried, quickly, sharply. "Redcoats! Down on the necks of your horses!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### BACK IN PHILADELPHIA.

The youths were old campaigners.

Nothing had to be beaten into their heads.

They knew what threatened in an instant.

They had as perfect an understanding of the situation as if an extended explanation had been made by Dick.

As one man, the youths threw themselves forward on the necks of their horses.

None too quick were they.

There was a flash of fire from among the trees.

There was the crash of firearms.

Redcoats were there! And they had fired a volley.

Thanks to the prompt action of the youths, however, not one of their number was killed.

Two or three received flesh-wounds, but nothing of a serious character.

Two horses were killed, and dropped in the water.

As the water was shallow, however, the riders were in no danger of being drowned.

"Charge!" roared Dick.

His blood was up.

He did not like this thing of being taken at a disadvantage and by surprise.

Dick did not believe the party in the timber was a large one, however.



The volley which had been fired had not been large enough to indicate the presence of a large force.

Dick judged that there might be thirty or forty, not more.

His "Liberty Boys" could quickly rout them.

The youths obeyed the command to "charge!" instantly.

They plunged the spurs into the horses' flanks and the animals leaped forward, snorting with pain and terror.

In expectation of a pistol volley, the youths sheltered themselves behind their horses' heads and necks as much as was possible.

It was well that they did so.

The redcoats fired two pistol volleys.

Two or three of the youths were wounded, but none were killed.

In another instant they were into the timber and among the redcoats.

There were lively times there, for a few moments.

The "Liberty Boys" fired a volley from their pistols and then attacked the redcoats with sabers.

A number of the redcoats were killed before they could escape.

The others got away as quickly as possible.

There could not have been more than twenty-five or thirty of the fellows, Dick decided.

So it did not take the "Liberty Boys" long to put their enemies to flight.

The "Liberty Boys" whose horses had been killed caught a couple of the horses that had been ridden by two of the redcoats.

The youths rode onward, and half an hour later they emerged from the timber.

They were some four or five miles west of Philadelphia.

They kept a sharp lookout.

They might happen upon a party of British at any moment.

Not finding any very soon the youths divided up into several parties and went to different farm-houses to get their dinner.

An hour and a half later they met at a specified place and again started out in search of marauding bands of redcoats.

About the middle of the afternoon they came upon such a party.

There were perhaps thirty in the party, and they had helped themselves to two teams and wagons and were just starting away from the farm-house where they had secured the property.

"Charge!" cried Dick; and the "Liberty Boys" dashed forward with wild cheers.

The youths chased this band of redcoats clear to the timber.

They killed two or three and wounded several.

"This is doing pretty well," remarked Dick, in a tone of satisfaction as they rode back to the farm-house. "I guess the redcoats will have something to think and talk about to-night."

"So they will," agreed Bob; "they'll be a mad lot of people or I'm mightily mistaken."

The farmer was profuse in his thanks to Dick and the "Liberty Boys" for saving his property.

"No thanks are necessary, sir," said Dick; "we are here for the purpose of making things as unpleasant for the British as possible. It is our business. There is one thing you may do, however, if you like, and that is, to bury the two dead redcoats who are lying out there in the road."

"I'll do thet, shore!" the farmer said.

Then he took a spade and went to work.

The "Liberty Boys" rode onward, in search of more redcoat bands.

They were so fortunate as to run upon one more gang that afternoon.

They quickly put it to rout, and drove it toward Philadelphia at a great rate.

It was now getting well along toward evening, so they decided to suspend operations for the day.

They divided up into four parties and went to as many farm-houses and got supper; then they met again and went into camp in the timber, a mile from Schuylkill.

They were up an hour before sunrise next morning and were away.

They crossed the Schuylkill at the ford, made their way across the country to the Delaware, and crossed it at a ferry a few miles above Philadelphia.

The ferry was owned by a man whom Dick knew and whom he knew to be a staunch patriot.

Dick learned from the ferryman that parties of redcoats were roaming about the country on the New Jersey side of the river, same as on the Pennsylvania side.

"We'll make some of them wish they had never come over here," said Dick, grimly.

After leaving the ferryboat the youths mounted their horses and rode away into the country.

The "Liberty Boys" put in a lively day. They ran across four redcoat bands during the day and put each and every one to flight.

Along toward evening they recrossed the Delaware and made their way back toward Valley Forge.

Dick had promised General Washington to return and



report every forty-eight hours, and they had now been gone two days.

When Dick reported and told General Washington what they had accomplished, the commander-in-chief was well pleased.

"Good!" he said, with an air of satisfaction. "You have done well. Keep it up, Dick, my boy; keep on worrying the redcoats. Make it as difficult as possible for them to gather up the horses and wagons."

"I will do so, your excellency."

Dick and the "Liberty Boys" kept up their good work.

They were out scouting and chasing redcoats every day, with the exception of two days, when Dick was sent to Philadelphia to see what the British were doing.

On the sixteenth day of June, General Washington sent for Dick and told him that he wished him to go to Philadelphia again.

"I think the British must be pretty nearly ready to move," the commander-in-chief said, "and I want you, Dick, to go to Philadelphia and find out all that you can. If you think, when you get there, that there is any likelihood that the army will move within the next two or three days, stay there until they do so; wait until they have crossed the river. If possible, take note of the order of their marching and then hasten back here and report."

"Very well, your excellency."

Dick withdrew at once and went to his quarters and began making arrangements for his trip.

He donned the old suit of citizen's clothing which had served him so well on former occasions.

Then he rolled a redcoat uniform up in as small a compass as possible and tied some paper around it.

"The uniform may come handy," thought Dick.

About the middle of the afternoon Dick mounted his horse and rode away.

He reached Philadelphia without adventure.

Dick left his horse at a livery stable, and, making his way to a tavern, ate supper.

Then he engaged a room for the night; and going to it, left his bundle.

This done, he went down on the street.

Dick mingled with the people and listened to everything that was said:

He picked up a good deal of information.

As Dick was sauntering along the street, a couple of British officers came walking along.

Just as they were passing Dick, one said:

"Let's go in here, Charlton, and have a few farewell rounds of drink."

"I'm agreeable."

The two officers passed through the doorway opening into a saloon.

Dick paused.

"Those officers are going in there to drink," thought Dick; "and as they drink, their tongues will be loosened. If I could overhear their talk I could learn much that would be of value. I will try and see if I can overhear their conversation."

It seldom took Dick long to make a decision.

It usually took even less time for him to act upon it when once the decision was made.

Dick entered the saloon.

It was quite an elaborate establishment for those days.

The front part of the room was given up to the bar and to chairs and tables for the general public.

Farther back, however, were a number of small rooms for the use of patrons who wished to be to themselves.

As Dick entered the saloon the two officers were just disappearing within one of those little rooms.

It happened to be the room nearest the bar-room proper.

Dick's quick eyes took in the situation.

Almost against the wall of this room stood one of the small tables.

Dick made his way across the room.

He walked like one who had had a bit too much to drink.

He reached the table and sat down in a chair, with a lurch.

The back of the chair in which he had seated himself was within a few inches of the wall of the little room into which the British officers had gone.

A waiter came and asked Dick what he wished.

Dick knew he would have to order something, so he ordered a pint of half-and-half.

The waiter looked at Dick somewhat suspiciously.

It was evident that he doubted the youth's ability to pay.

Dick shrewdly surmised this.

He drew a silver piece from his pocket.

"I can pay for what I order," he said, with an air of dignity such as a half-drunken man might be expected to assume.

"Oh, it's all right if ye can pay!" said the waiter.

Then he hastened away to fill the order.

He brought a pint mug of half-and-half, and, having received his pay, went to wait on some other customers.

Dick leaned back in the chair, and, by turning his head slightly, was enabled to place his ear against the wall.

The wall was nothing more than a thin partition.

Dick could hear and understand every word that was said by the officers in the little room.



The men were talking of personal matters which were of no interest to Dick.

He continued to listen, however.

He was sure that sooner or later they would discuss matters which would be of interest to him.

And he was right.

After the men had a round or two of drinks their conversation turned to the matters which Dick wished to hear discussed.

"Well, Charlton, so we move to-morrow?" Dick heard one of them say.

"Yes," was the reply; "the commander-in-chief issued the order this afternoon."

"At what hour to-morrow are we going to start?"

"As I understand it, not until after nightfall to-morrow evening."

"Ah! I see. General Clinton wants to steal a march on the rebels."

"Yes."

"He seems to wish to avoid a battle with the rebels."

"Yes; and not without reason. As I understand it, the rebel army has increased until it is nearly equal in numbers to our own. In addition to that, that Prussian, Baron Steuben, has drilled the rebels until they are almost as well up in military tactics as we are. With such a man as General Washington at their head, this makes the rebels extremely dangerous."

"True enough. I guess, as you say, that General Clinton is acting wisely in trying to avoid an engagement with them."

"I think so."

As may well be supposed, Dick listened to this conversation with interest.

He had learned just what he wished to know.

The British were to evacuate Philadelphia on the morrow.

They were to begin to move at nightfall.

There he had it in a nutshell.

Dick felt that there was no need of his remaining longer.

The officers might come out, and if he was still sitting there they might suspect that he had been listening.

He decided to leave the saloon immediately.

Just as he came to this decision, a party of redcoats entered the saloon.

There were six in the party.

They were rather boisterous.

They had been drinking and were already about half drunk.

They had undoubtedly started out to have a good time, and they were as evidently having it.

The soldiers came across the room and paused in front of the table at which Dick was seated.

Dick had paid no particular attention to them on their entrance, but now he looked up.

"Here's the table we want, boys!" cried one of the redcoats. "It's over in the corner here, and will be just what we want."

"But it is in use," said another, nodding toward Dick.

"Bah! A tramp; a beggar. We'll throw him out!"

This struck the others as being a good idea.

They were out for fun and were in for anything that promised diversion.

"So we will!" exclaimed another. "Such a fellow as that has no business here in the presence of gentlemen, anyway."

Dick saw that he was in for trouble.

He knew that it would do no good to attempt to get up from the table and away and escape an encounter.

The redcoats would not permit it.

They would attack him anyway.

Then, too, it would be entirely at variance with his nature to run.

He never sought trouble, but neither would he run to avoid it.

And when Dick saw that trouble was unavoidable, he always made it a rule to meet it at least half way.

He looked up at the redcoats and remarked in the coolest tone imaginable:

"I am neither a tramp nor a beggar, and as for my being in the presence of gentlemen, I do not see them. Where are they?"

"By Jove, Wilton, the beggar dares to be insulting!" cried one of the redcoats, growing red in the face. "He insinuates that we are not gentlemen."

"So he does, the tramp!"

"The beggar!"

"Let's teach him a lesson, fellows!"

"Throw him out!"

"Break his neck!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WEARING THE RED.

The redcoats were red in the face.

They were very angry.

They had drunk just enough liquor to make them easy to take offense.



Dick saw that they were about to attack him.

He quickly rose to his feet and stepped out from behind the table.

As he did so the redcoats leaped toward him.

"Here! here! we must have no trouble here!" cried the bartender.

But his words had no effect.

Mere words could not have stayed the rush of the redcoats.

They had been insulted.

They had been told to their teeth that they were no gentlemen, and by a tramp, a beggar!

They would teach the insolent fellow a lesson.

They did not know what a contract they had taken.

Had they been sober Dick could hardly have hoped to withstand the onslaught of six men, especially in the cramped quarters of a bar-room.

Half-drunk as the fellows were, however, made a great difference.

Dick was lithe, active, supple, quick as a cat, and, moreover, his mind was keen, clear and not befuddled by liquor.

The lively combat which now took place was a surprise to all the spectators.

It was a surprise, also, to the redcoats who were participating in it.

Of course they had expected to crush the youth down by force of numbers at once and without the least trouble.

They quickly found their mistake.

Dick leaped here and there, in and out, first to one side and then the other, and again and again his fists shot out with the precision and force of piston-rods.

To the unspeakable amazement of the spectators, and almost before they knew what had happened, Dick had knocked down each and every one of the six redcoats.

The spectators uttered exclamations of surprise and wonderment.

"Wonderful!"

"Who would have thought it!"

"The most remarkable affair I ever witnessed."

Such were some of the exclamations given utterance to.

The two British officers hearing the sounds of the encounter came out of the little room to see what was going on.

When they saw six redcoats piled upon the floor and realized that it was the work of one person they were greatly amazed.

They stared at Dick wonderingly.

What manner of youth was this who, single-handed and alone, had put six men upon the floor?

Dick had struck hard, and the redcoats lay where they had fallen, for the time being, dazed.

In the melee Dick's hat had fallen from his head and his face was thus revealed to view.

It was seen that he was a handsome, bright-faced youth of seemingly not more than nineteen years of age.

One of the British officers had once seen Dick.

As he gazed upon the bright, handsome face of the youth, the remembrance came back to him.

He recognized Dick.

"By all that's wonderful, Charlton," he cried, "it's Dick Slater, the rebel spy! Seize him, somebody! Don't let the spy escape!"

But Dick did not intend to let himself be seized if he could help it.

Nothing was further from his intentions than to allow himself to be captured.

As the officer uttered the words, Dick bounded toward the doorway.

One man attempted to grab him, but a blow on the jaw laid the fellow flat.

There were others between Dick and the door, but they scattered as he approached.

They had been eye-witnesses to the youth's wonderful prowess and did not care to take the chance of receiving a dose of the same kind of medicine which Dick had dealt out to the redcoats.

Seeing that the inmates of the room had no stomach for trying to stop Dick, the British officers drew their swords and leaped forward as if to cut the fugitive down.

Doubtless they would have done this rather than allow him to escape, but they were unable to do so.

Dick was too quick for them.

He reached the door ahead of them, and, jerking it open, leaped through the doorway.

As he did so, one of the officers made a cut at him with his sword.

He missed Dick, but his keen blade struck the edge of the door, which was of pine, and split off a huge splinter a foot long.

Had the sword struck Dick, it would have split him to the waist.

But it did not strike him.

Dick had escaped, temporarily, at least.

As he leaped out upon the street he collided with a British soldier and sent the fellow headlong into the gutter.

Dick did not stop to apologize.

He knew that he would be pursued.

The streets were thronged with redcoats.



A hue and cry would be raised at once.  
 Soon a horde of pursuers would be at his heels.  
 Dick bounded down the street at his best speed.  
 He must get as good a start as possible.  
 He turned down the first side street he came to.  
 As he did so he heard a great hue and cry behind him.  
 "They're after me," he thought; "well, they'll have to run if they catch me."

Dick was half way down the block when the advance guard of his pursuers turned the corner.

It was not so dark but that he could be seen.

The instant the redcoats caught sight of him, they gave utterance to shouts of satisfaction.

"Let them yell," thought Dick, grimly; "they haven't got me yet."

Dick was a splendid runner.

He was a genuine all-around athlete.

It would take exceptionally speedy runners to catch him.

Dick did not fear those behind him.

What he was afraid of was that he would be challenged by others from in front.

The sight of a running man would be sufficient to arouse the suspicions of those who might see him.

This soon came about.

As he turned around the next corner he met a little squad of redcoats face to face.

They saw Dick coming.

They seemed to think it would be a good plan to stop Dick.

They leaped in front of Dick and attempted to stop him.

They might as well have tried to stop a runaway locomotive.

Dick did not try to get around them.

He leaped straight toward them.

Out shot his fists.

Crack, crack! Thud, thud!

Dick had knocked two of the redcoats down, and without pausing the least bit, leaped through the gap thus created and raced onward up the street.

The comrades of the fallen man gave utterance to shouts of anger, and, whirling, started in pursuit.

"Stop!" they yelled. "Stop, or we will fill you full of bullets!"

"If you shoot at me, you will kill somebody else!" yelled back Dick.

"Stop!" again cried the redcoats. "We give you fair warning."

But Dick did not slacken his speed in the least.

He had had considerable experience.

He knew how difficult it was for any one to shoot straight while running at full speed.

If they should hit him it would be only by accident.

Dick was quite ready to take the chances.

The redcoats soon put their threats into effect.

Crack! crack! crack! crack! went the pistols.

One bullet whistled past Dick's ear, but the others must have gone wild.

At any rate, Dick did not hear them.

A few moments later he turned and darted down another street.

Dick raced down this street until midway of the block and then he turned down an alley.

He ran only a short distance into the alley and paused.

He did not believe his pursuers would think to look for him here.

But he was mistaken.

The redcoats paused at the entrance to the alley.

"I'll wager a month's pay that he went down this alley,"

Dick heard one of the redcoats say.

"I have an idea you are right," said another voice.

"Come on, then, let's follow him."

"Jove!" thought Dick; "I'm in a tight place now. What shall I do?"

Whatever he was to do must be done quickly.

It was very dark in the alley.

It would be impossible to see any one at the distance of a few feet.

Dick was standing beside a high board fence.

Dick heard the hurrying footsteps of his pursuers.

They were soon close at hand.

"This is the darkest place I was ever in," remarked a voice, when the fellows were just about opposite Dick. "This out-Egypt Egypt."

"That's right!" growled another voice. "He might be within ten feet of us and we never know it."

"So he might; but I don't think he would stop. He's still going, I'll wager."

"I'm glad you think so," thought Dick; "otherwise you might go to fumbling around here in the alley and find me."

The redcoats moved on.

They were soon past Dick.

The youth breathed a sigh of relief.

He felt that he was safe once more.

He was in no hurry to move, however.

He thought it better to wait till the redcoats had left the alley.

He did so.



Then he rose to his feet and walked back up the alley to the street.

He paused just within the entrance to the alley and looked up and down the street.

There were a few people in sight, but none were running, and there seemed to be no excitement; so he decided that it would be safe for him to emerge from his hiding-place.

He stepped out upon the street and moved away at a leisurely walk.

He knew he would be less likely to attract attention by taking things easy.

Dick made his way by gradual stages and presently reached the tavern where he had engaged a room.

Dick thought he had done enough for one night, so he went to his room and went to bed.

Dick was up bright and early next morning.

He donned his redcoat uniform.

It was his purpose to be on the streets during the day, gathering up all the information he could, and it was his intention, also, to, if possible, go across the Delaware with the British troops and go with them far enough next morning to take note of the order in which the troops were to march.

As soon as Dick had eaten his breakfast he sallied out.

It was easy to see that something unusual was on the tapis.

Everywhere was bustle and confusion.

There was excitement in the air.

Such being the case, it was comparatively safe for Dick to go and come as he pleased.

Everybody was busy and had no time to scrutinize any one closely.

It is true that it had become known in headquarters, and generally, as well, that Dick Slater, the "rebel" spy, had been discovered within the confines of the city the preceding night, but the majority thought that the manner in which he had been chased had probably alarmed him to such an extent that he had left the city.

Their thinking thus showed how little the British officers really knew regarding Dick.

It would have taken a great deal more than the mere chasing of him to frighten Dick.

He was not the kind of a youth to get frightened.

This made it easier for him, however.

There was little danger of his being recognized.

A scarlet uniform was all that was needed.

The day passed rapidly.

The British commander-in-chief had issued the order to move as soon as the sun went down.

The order was obeyed to the letter.

As the sun sank to rest in the West the front columns of the British army moved slowly down to the river and began embarking in the boats.

## CHAPTER IX.

"TO-MORROW THERE WILL BE A BATTLE!"

Dick was wide awake.

He was on hand and was taking note of everything.

He thought it might be possible that General Clinton had changed his mind, after all, and that the trip to New York would be made by water.

Dick soon found that this was not the case, however.

The soldiers were simply ferried across the river.

All night long this was kept up.

By morning all the troops had been transferred to the New Jersey side.

Dick mingled boldly with the redcoats.

He went across in one of the last boats which made the trip.

He marched with the troops, and remained in the ranks till Haddonfield was reached.

There a stop was made.

General Clinton considered himself safe from pursuit.

So he was now in no particular hurry.

He would take his time and arrange the troops in the order in which they were to march.

Dick moved here and there, and took note of everything that was going on.

He made especial note of the order in which the British troops were arranged.

He had just about made up his mind to slip away and start back to Philadelphia, when something happened which hastened his action.

A British officer, who happened to meet Dick face to face, recognized the youth!

"Great stars!" he exclaimed. "It is Dick Slater, the rebel spy, wearing a British uniform, and here in the British lines! Seize him, men! Don't let him escape!"

The officer drew his sword.

But Dick acted too promptly for them.

He leaped away, with the speed of the wind.

It happened, luckily, that he was at the edge of the army when recognized, and he raced to where the horses belonging to some of the dragoons were standing.



The man in charge of the horses was looking in another direction and did not see Dick approaching.

The youth reached him, and, leaping on the back of the nearest horse, was riding away before the fellow discovered what had happened.

There was a great hue and cry, of course.

A hundred soldiers had set out in chase of Dick the instant he had started to flee.

When Dick's pursuers reached the spot where the horses were standing, they, too, mounted and set out in swift pursuit.

Dick looked back and saw what the redcoats had done.

"It is to be a race to the Delaware!" the youth thought, grimly. "If I can reach Tom Stark's ferry ahead of them will be all right; and I am going to do it, if possible!"

Dick looked at his horse critically.

"I guess he is as good an animal as any of them," he thought. "I had no time to choose, but was forced to take the first horse I came to. Well, time will tell."

The race was indeed a lively one.

The pursuing redcoats lashed their horses unmercifully.

They seemed determined to catch the fugitive or kill their horses.

Dick was getting good speed out of his horse without shaming it.

He kept close watch, and for a while he thought he was holding his own.

A little later, however, he saw that his pursuers were slowly drawing up on him.

"They are taking all the life out of their mounts, however," Dick said to himself; "and I believe that after we have gone another mile or so I shall be able to hold my own, and perhaps may even begin to draw away from them." The results proved that Dick was possessed of good judgment.

By the time another mile had been traversed, Dick noted with satisfaction that he was holding his own.

The redcoats, while closer than they had been at first, were not getting any closer.

Their horses were tiring.

Dick's horse was tiring some, also, but not so much as were those ridden by the British soldiers.

"I believe I shall succeed in reaching the river far enough in advance so that I will be able to get far enough into the stream to be out of musket-shot," thought Dick; "that is, if Tom is there, ready to start across immediately."

This was the one thing which worried Dick now.

If Tom was at his post on the ferryboat, all would be well; if not, Dick would have trouble in escaping, after all.

It was only about seven miles to the point where the ferry was, and it did not take a great while to reach the point in question at the speed at which fugitive and pursuers were going.

As Dick came in sight of the ferryboat, he was delighted to see Tom was on board.

"It's all right; I will escape the redcoats, after all!" thought Dick.

He looked back.

His pursuers were nearly a quarter of a mile behind.

During the last mile or so they had lost ground.

Dick rode down the bank of the river and almost to the ferryboat before reducing the speed of his horse.

Then he reined up, quickly, and rode onto the ferryboat at a walk.

Tom had leaped forward as Dick approached.

"Quick, Tom!" cried Dick. "Cast loose! I am pursued by redcoats!"

Tom did not stop to ask questions.

He cast off immediately.

Then the ferryboat began to move out into the stream.

The redcoats came on rapidly.

When they got to where they could see what was going on, they set up a terrible yell.

"Wait!" they howled. "Stop the boat! Hold on!"

They might as well have talked to the winds.

The ferryboat was now a hundred yards out in the stream.

The redcoats raced down to the water's edge.

They leaped from their horses, and, kneeling down at the edge of the water, leveled their muskets and took aim.

"Stop the boat!" one cried. "Stop it and come back or we will fire!"

"Fire and be hanged to you!" growled Tom.

He had no intention of obeying the command of the redcoat.

"They can't hit us at this distance," said Dick.

"We'll risk it, ennyhow!" said Tom, grimly.

He had not much more than spoken when there came the reports from the muskets.

A couple of bullets struck the ferryboat, but none came anywhere near Dick or Tom.

Before the redcoats could reload, the boat was clear out of range.

The disappointed redcoats danced about and waved their muskets threateningly, but that was all the good it did them.

Their intended prey had escaped them.

Dick told Tom where he had been and all about affairs, as the man was a staunch patriot.



"I guess I'll stay over on this side a while, Dick," said Tom, with a grin, as Dick led his horse ashore; "I think it will be healthier for me."

He nodded toward the other shore.

The redcoats were still there.

"They're waiting for you to come back, Tom;" with a smile.

"Yas, an' they'll jes' haf ter wait! Ef they think I'm goin' ter go back thar an' give 'em er chance et me, they air badly fooled."

"Right, Tom; they won't stay long. They will have to return to the army. As soon as they see you are not coming back they will take their departure."

"I think so, Dick."

Dick bade his friend good-by, and, mounting, rode away.

It was quite a ride to Valley Forge, but Dick did not spare his horse.

He reached there in two hours and a half after leaving the river.

He leaped from his foaming horse and hastened to Washington's headquarters.

Washington greeted Dick eagerly.

"The British have moved?" he asked.

"Yes, your excellency; they are now at Haddonfield, five miles from Philadelphia," replied Dick.

"At Haddonfield, you say?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"You have just come from there?"

"I have."

Then Dick went ahead and told the commander-in-chief what he had seen and learned, and how he had marched with the troops to Haddonfield.

He told in what order the troops were to march, and everything that would be of interest or value to General Washington.

The commander-in-chief was well pleased.

"Good!" he exclaimed, when Dick had finished. "You have done well, Dick, my boy—extremely well, indeed."

"I am glad you are pleased, your excellency," said Dick, simply.

General Washington at once gave the order for the army to get ready to move.

Soon all was bustle and confusion.

Having known for several weeks that the British army intended moving across New Jersey to New York, General Washington had had everything in readiness for a quick move.

All his orders were already written out.

This being the case, it took but a comparatively short time for the army to get ready to move.

Long before nightfall the front ranks of the long column marched out of Valley Forge and away.

The general course pursued was east by north.

The patriot army was headed for ferries across the Delaware at points considerably above Trenton.

The army was in two divisions, and one crossed at Coryell's ferry and the other at Sherard's ferry.

The patriots marched in a due easterly direction now.

It was General Washington's intention to head the British off, if possible.

Just as soon as they had crossed the river, General Washington had sent out scouts to learn the location of the British.

Dick was the chief of these scouts.

He went with them, and they had to go entirely according to his orders.

Twice every twenty-four hours Dick sent a messenger to the patriot commander-in-chief telling him the location of the British, the progress they were making, and all about them.

By this means General Washington was enabled to keep well informed regarding the movements of the enemy.

General Clinton had scouts out keeping watch on the patriot army also.

Dick was well aware of this, and he succeeded in capturing two or three of the fellows.

He could not capture all of them, however, and the British commander-in-chief was kept informed as to the whereabouts of the patriot army.

He soon saw that if he went straight ahead and tried to get across the Raritan River and reach New York City by the way of Newark and Paulus Hook, he would be sure to have trouble.

He could not avoid a battle with the patriot army, if General Washington chose to offer one, and General Clinton knew the great American general well enough to know that he was not making such haste to try to head the British off for nothing.

He believed that if he kept on in the way he was going it would be impossible to avoid a battle, and the British commander-in-chief did not wish to engage in one.

To the end of avoiding having to do so, General Clinton, after having held a council of war, decided to turn aside to the right and make as rapid a march as possible toward Sandy Hook.

He thought it possible that he might, by so doing, get away from General Washington and avoid an engagement.

Accordingly on this same day—June 25—he gave the order and the army turned sharp to the right and bore away toward Sandy Hook.



When Dick saw the maneuver from the top of a tall tree, where he had stationed himself for the purpose of taking observations, he was at first somewhat puzzled to account for the movement.

Then it came to him suddenly.

"General Clinton wishes to avoid a battle," Dick said to himself; "he is making for Sandy Hook. Washington must know of this at once."

Dick hastened down out of the treetop.

He left Bob in command of the party of scouts, and, mounting his horse, rode away toward where the patriot army was, at full speed.

When he reached the point where the patriot army was, Dick quickly imparted the important news to the commander-in-chief.

"We must head him off and force him to fight, at once!" declared General Washington, with grim earnestness. "He shall not escape us in that fashion. He must fight!"

Then he issued orders for the army to move forward on the double-quick.

The order was obeyed, and soon the patriot army was hastening forward on the double-quick.

It took two days for the patriots to get within striking distance, even then.

The British were marching as rapidly as they could, the same as were the patriots.

But their speed was not so great as that of the patriots.

On the night of June 27 the left wing of the British, eight thousand strong, under General Cornwallis, was encamped near Monmouth Courthouse; the right wing, having about the same number of men, under Knyphausen, lay a little distance beyond the courthouse, on the road leading toward Middletown. With the left wing was General Clinton.

The first division of the patriot army, under General Lee, consisted of six thousand men, and lay about half way between Englishtown and Monmouth Courthouse, near the Freehold meeting-house. It was about five miles distant from the British. The main body of the patriot army was at Englishtown, about three miles from Lee's division.

Dick had been kept very busy the past two days. He had slept only twice, and then only a couple of hours each time.

He was tireless, however, and was ready for service.

He had returned from a scouting expedition early in the evening and had informed General Washington of the exact positions of the divisions of the British army.

When he had made his report, General Washington had made one simple, earnest remark:

"The time has come!"

He sent for the members of his staff at once.

They hastened to report at headquarters.

They, like General Washington, believed the time had come to strike the British a hard blow.

It was decided to do so.

They would force the British to fight.

General Washington sat down and wrote an order, which he sealed and addressed to General Lee.

He again sent for Dick.

"Dick," he said, when the youth appeared, "take the order and deliver it to General Lee at the earliest possible moment. It is an order for him to attack the British left wing, and keep the enemy engaged until I can bring the main army up to aid him. The attack is to be made as early as possible in the morning. I tell you this so that in case this order should be lost by you, you will be enabled to give the order verbally, the which you are hereby instructed to do."

Dick took the order and placed it carefully in his pocket.

"I will be off at once, your excellency," he said.

Dick saluted and withdrew.

He bridled and saddled his horse, and, mounting, rode away into the darkness.

It did not take him long to reach the division under General Lee.

He delivered the order.

General Lee read it.

Dick imagined there was not a pleased look on the officer's face.

General Lee looked up presently, however, and said:

"Tell the commander-in-chief that I will do as he has ordered."

"Very well, sir," said Dick; and, saluting, he withdrew.

Mounting his horse, Dick rode back to the patriot encampment at Englishtown.

The "Liberty Boys" were with this division.

Dick went at once to Washington's headquarters and delivered General Lee's message.

"'Tis well," said General Washington, in a tone of deep satisfaction. "To-morrow, Dick, there will be a battle!"

## CHAPTER X.

"DOING THINGS UP BROWN."

"I am glad, your excellency," said Dick.

The commander-in-chief smiled and gave Dick a look of approval.



"I know you are, Dick," he said; "and that is the way I like to hear any one talk."

In truth, all the patriot soldiers were glad when they learned that there was a good prospect that they would get into a battle with the British on the morrow.

They were eager for a chance at the redcoats.

The soldiers were up and preparing to march, long before daybreak next morning.

They had breakfast and then set out.

Long before they reached Monmouth Courthouse the sound of firing in that direction was heard.

At the sound of the firing, Dick Slater and his company of "Liberty Boys" became eager and excited.

"Jove, Dick! it is hard to be here doing nothing while there is fighting going on," said Bob Estabrook.

"I wish we were there," said Mark Morrison.

"Perhaps the commander-in-chief would let us go on ahead," said Sam Sanderson.

"Do you think he would, Dick?" asked Bob, eagerly.

"I don't know, Bob," replied Dick; "but I can soon find out."

"Do so, old man. Go to him at once."

Dick rode up alongside General Washington, and, after saluting, asked permission to hasten forward with his company of "Liberty Boys."

General Washington granted the permission readily.

Thanking him earnestly, Dick rode back and took his place at the head of his company.

The youths were all mounted and they rode away at a gallop.

They were followed by the cheers of their comrades.

All the soldiers liked Dick and the "Liberty Boys."

The youths rode rapidly.

They were anxious to get into the fight.

Soon after passing Monmouth Courthouse, the "Liberty Boys" began meeting patriot soldiers in full retreat.

Dick asked a number why they were retreating, but could get no satisfactory reply.

"We'll press on, anyway, fellows," he said; "perhaps we may be able to do something to put a stop to this. I don't like the looks of it at all."

"Forward! ever forward!" cried Bob.

Then the "Liberty Boys" gave utterance to a cheer and rode onward at as rapid a pace as they could go.

Dick kept calling to the retreating soldiers to face about and return to the attack.

He succeeded in getting many to do so, while others stopped running and at least stood their ground.

Soon the youths came in sight of the main patriot force

—that is to say, the main force of that division of the army under General Lee.

The entire force seemed to be retreating.

Such was indeed the case.

Luckily for the patriot army and the cause of Liberty, however, General Washington put in an appearance.

He had followed the "Liberty Boys" and was only a short distance behind them when they reached the scene of action.

History lays the blame for the retreat of the patriots on that Sunday morning at Monmouth Courthouse at the door of Charles Lee, the commander of this division.

History charges General Lee with rank cowardice, and says that he ordered the retreat when everything looked favorable for the patriot soldiers to strike the British force a most damaging blow.

Whether or not this is in exact accordance with facts, the writer, of course, would not pretend to say; but as it is a matter of history, and as the man in question was the same General Lee, who more than a year before had refused time and again to send General Washington assistance when ordered to do so by the commander-in-chief, we are quite willing to accept the statements of the historians as being true.

The fact that General Lee was tried by court-martial later on and suspended from command in the army for the term of one year, on account of his conduct on the battlefield at Monmouth, would seem to be ample proof that the statements made by our historians were in accordance with the facts.

At any rate, General Washington's presence on the battlefield was badly needed when he put in his appearance.

He rallied the men, put a stop to the retreat, and soon the British were brought to a standstill.

The battle now began to rage fiercely.

It was a battle, too, not a retreat.

Cornwallis and Clinton found that the patriot soldiers had improved greatly. Not that they were braver, but they knew better how to fight—thanks to the teaching which Baron Steuben had given them during the winter at Valley Forge.

The main portion of the patriot army finally reached the scene of action and entered into the affair.

All the forces, practically, on both sides were now in action.

On a hill some patriot soldiers had planted two field-pieces.

The gunners worked like trojans, and grape and solid shot were poured into the ranks of the British.

One of the gunners was an Irishman named Pitcher.



His wife was with him on the field, and had been with him all through the campaign.

She helped by carrying water from a spring, the water being used to dampen the sponges with which the cannon were swabbed out.

As she was returning with a pail of water, Mrs. Pitcher saw her husband shot down at his post. There was no artilleryman to take his place, so Mrs. Pitcher did it herself, swabbing the cannon and ramming home cartridge after cartridge with as much skill as her husband had shown.

The soldiers gave utterance to a great cheer when they saw this brave act of a brave and noble woman.

The soldiers ever after that day called the woman "Major Molly," and Congress voted her a sergeant's commission warrant, with half-pay through life.

I have given this instance here to show of what material the patriots were made. Such people could not be kept from achieving their freedom.

Meanwhile the battle raged.

Dick and his "Liberty Boys" were here, there and everywhere.

They were in the thick of the fight, when an orderly came to Dick and told him that General Washington wished him to take his company of "Liberty Boys" and storm all over at one side, where the British had planted some cannon, with which they were doing considerable execution. "The commander-in-chief says for you to silence the guns, if possible!" the orderly shouted in Dick's ear, and Dick replied:

"Tell his excellency that we will silence the guns!"

The orderly bowed and rode away, and Dick turned in his saddle, and, waving his sword, cried:

"Follow me, my brave boys! We are to charge yonder hill on the hill. Come on! Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

Dick urged his horse forward at a gallop, and with a loud cheer the "Liberty Boys" followed.

They rode across the field, straight toward the hill. Up the sloping side they went like an ascending avalanche.

The British saw them coming, and did their best to ram home fresh cartridges in time to fire into the crowd of brave youths, but they did not quite succeed.

Before they could apply the matches, the youths were upon and among them.

The combat was short and sharp.

A number of the British were killed and captured, while the others took to their heels.

Dick leaped off his horse, and the other youths did likewise.

They quickly bound the hands of the prisoners.

Then Dick looked around him and took note of the battle.

He saw that the British were retreating.

Not everywhere, but in a few places.

The youth was confident the patriots would be the victors.

"Hurrah!" then cried Dick, waving his hat. "We have beaten the British! The day is ours!"

The battle was not yet ended, however, not by any means. The British fought stubbornly.

It was give and take.

It was a terrible battle in one respect—the awful heat.

It was a very hot, sultry day.

Many men were stricken down by the heat.

There were many cases of sunstroke.

The men on both sides fought stubbornly, desperately, however.

All through the afternoon they kept it up.

The British made several desperate attempts to turn the patriot flanks, and to beat their way through the centre, all to no avail. The patriots successfully resisted every such attempt.

At last the sun went down, and presently the sounds of the battle ceased.

The soldiers of both armies were utterly exhausted.

General Washington was greatly encouraged, however.

The threatened defeat had been turned into a partial victory, and he was determined to make it a complete one on the morrow.

He made up his mind to renew the conflict as soon as it was light next morning.

He sent troops around to be in readiness to attack the British on the left at daybreak, and this would be the signal for a general engagement.

The soldiers ate their suppers without breaking ranks, and slept on their arms.



Tired and exhausted as they were, they were full of fight, and were eager for the coming of the morrow.

But the British were not so eager for a continuation of the fight.

General Clinton was far from satisfied.

He had lost nearly a thousand men, dead, wounded and prisoners, while he realized that the patriot loss had not been nearly so great.

He did not wish to engage in battle on the morrow.

His men, too, ate supper in the ranks, and lay down on their arms, but they did not lie there all night.

At midnight they rose silently to their feet and stole away through the darkness.

One after another the regiments moved away and at last all had gone—and so stealthily and silently had it been accomplished that the patriot pickets knew nothing of what was going on.

When the patriots went to attack the British next morning, the British were not there to attack.

The dead and some wounded were all that remained.

The British army was well on its way to Middletown, and it would be useless to follow.

Washington was well satisfied, however.

He had really won a victory, and the effect of it was good.

The Hessians under Clinton were so dissatisfied now, with the way things were going, and had come to like

America so well, that two thousand of them deserted from the British ranks in less than a month.

Dick Slater and his band of brave "Liberty Boys" were complimented highly by General Washington because of their fine work in capturing the British battery.

"The commander-in-chief seemed to think we did things up brown, yesterday, Dick!" said Bob, a little later, when they were alone.

"So he did, Bob," agreed Dick.

THE END.

The next number (22) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS AT BAY; OR, THE CLOSEST CALL OF ALL," by Harry Moore.

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